

TESTIMONY – MARCH 6, 2008 - IWT

HELLO, MY NAME IS THOMAS PHILLIPS, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF CAPITAL WORKFORCE PARTNERS – THE NORTH CENTRAL CONNECTICUT WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD AND ONE OF THE STATE'S FIVE BOARDS THAT COMPRISE THE CONNECTICUT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL.

QUOTING FROM OUR RECENT WORKFORCE SUMMARY, WHICH WE CO-PRODUCED WITH CBIA:

- 82% OF BUSINESSES SURVEYED IN CT SAY THEIR COMPANY HAS EXPERIENCED DIFFICULTY IN FINDING QUALIFIED WORKERS.
- 68% OF THOSE RESPONDING SAID THAT THE AVAILABILITY OF QUALIFIED WORKERS IS SOMEWHAT TO VERY IMPORTANT IN DETERMINING WHETHER OR NOT TO EXPAND OR RELOCATE

PART OF OUR CURRENT CHALLENGE REQUIRES US TO FIND NEW PEOPLE FOR THE WORKFORCE AND PROVIDE TRAINING TO GIVE THEM AND THEIR HIRING COMPANIES A COMPETITIVE EDGE. BUT WE NEED TO DO MORE THAN JUST THAT. WE HAVE AN EXISTING WORKFORCE IN OUR REGION AND STATE THAT IN MANY CASES HAVE OUTDATED AND IMPROPERLY MATCHED SKILLS FOR TODAY'S BUSINESS NEEDS. WE ALSO HAVE A LARGE POPULATION OF "LOW WAGE WORKERS" OFTEN WORKING 2 AND 3 JOBS JUST TO TRY TO PUT FOOD ON THE TABLE AND PAY FOR HOUSING AND HEAT. AND THAT IS WHY I AM HERE TODAY TO STRONGLY SUPPORT **H.B. 5584 - INCREASING FUNDING FOR THE INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING PROGRAM.**

THESE DAYS, WE NEED TO MEASURE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS BY THEIR SUCCESS IN DEVELOPING "SELF-SUFFICIENT" WORKERS, AND WE NEED TO PROMOTE AND REWARD LOCAL INNOVATION FOR A CONTINUATION OF GROWTH AND UPWARD MOBILITY. WE ADDRESS THESE NEEDS THROUGH HELPING BUSINESSES REMAIN COMPETITIVE BY BUILDING THE SKILLS OF THEIR EXISTING WORKERS – OTHERWISE KNOWN AS INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING, BY TAPPING IN TO UNDERUTILIZED "SPECIAL POPULATIONS" ELIGIBLE FOR OUR WORKFORCE AND BY DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS FOR LOW WAGE WORKERS.

TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF THE STATE'S EXISTING WORKFORCE THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF LABOR PROVIDED PARTIAL FUNDING THROUGH WHAT IS KNOWN AS "INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING" – OUR WORKER SKILL UPGRADE INITIATIVE. JUST LAST YEAR, IN OUR REGION ALONE, WE WERE ABLE TO PROVIDE TRAINING TO OVER 1,500 WORKERS AT 50 BUSINESSES THROUGH OUR TRAINING PROVIDERS IN SUCH AREAS AS

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LEAN TOOLS, SIX SIGMA, BLUEPRINT READING, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, ETC. WE LEVERAGED COMPANY FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS OF OVER 50% TO MATCH THE PUBLIC TRAINING DOLLARS. WE ARE EFFECTIVE IN ENSURING CONTINUOUS – ON-THE-JOB TRAINING – ACHIEVING WAGE GROWTH, BUSINESS COMPETITIVENESS AND UPWARD MOBILITY. THIS IS WHAT WE NEED TO KEEP DOING TO KEEP CONNECTICUT'S BUSINESSES HERE, KEEP THEM GROWING AND ENCOURAGE NEW BUSINESS TO THE STATE. **BUT WE NEED MORE PUBLIC INVESTMENT TO BUILD ON THIS MOMENTUM.** SO WE STRONGLY SUPPORT H.B. 5584 AND OTHER STATEWIDE TRAINING BILLS THAT HELP ADVANCE OUR STATE'S WORKERS.

FROM A COMPETITIVE STANDPOINT, MASSACHUSETTS PROVIDES \$21 MILLION AND RHODE ISLAND \$9 MILLION VERSUS CONNECTICUT'S \$ 500 THOUSAND FOR THE INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING PROGRAM. THE CONNECTICUT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL IS REQUESTING \$5 MILLION TO BUILD ON OUR MOMENTUM AND, BROADEN OUR REACH PARTICULARLY IN THE AREAS OF MOST NEED – MANUFACTURING AND ALLIED HEALTHCARE. WE HAVE THE INFRASTRUCTURE IN PLACE AND WAITING LISTS OF BUSINESSES EAGER TO PUT THEIR LEVERAGED TRAINING DOLLARS TO WORK.

LET'S KEEP THE TALENT PIPELINE MOVING IN A PROGRESSIVE FASHION AND ENSURING SELF-SUFFICIENCY FOR CONNECTICUT'S FAMILIES AND KEEPING CONNECTICUT'S BUSINESSES COMPETITIVE.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND CONSIDERATION.

Testimony submitted by: Thomas Phillips, President and CEO, Capital Workforce Partners, and member of the Connecticut Workforce Development Council. One Union Place, Hartford, CT 06103 522-1111



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